

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 HAVANA 00715 01 OF 02 172110Z
ACTION ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 EUR-12 NEA-10 ISO-00 IO-13 HA-05
ACDA-12 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10 L-03
NSAE-00 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 OMB-01 NSCE-00 SSO-00
USIE-00 INRE-00 /115 W
-----033285 172130Z /64

O R 171629Z MAR 78
FM USINT HAVANA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1416
INFO AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY TEHRAN
USMISSION USNATO

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 HAVANA 0715

EO 11652: GDS
TAGS: PDEV PBOR MILI ET SO CU UR
SUBJ: CASTRO APPRAISES ETHIOPIAN VICTORY

REF: HAVANA 666

1. SUMMARY. FIDEL CASTRO, IN MARCH 15, SPEECH, PORTRAYS US AND NATO ALLIES AS RESPONSIBLE FOR SOMALI INVASION CASTS SPECIAL BARBS AT IRAN AND SAUDI ARABIA, AND STATES CUBA IS WATCHING FOR DOMESTIC POLITICAL CHANGES IN SOMALIA DURING COMING WEEKS. CASTRO REFERS FAVORABLY TO ETHIOPIAN PLEDGE AGAINST SOMALI BORDER CROSSING, THOUGH HE DOESN'T ENTIRELY EXCLUDE IT. WHILE AVOIDING DIRECT REFERENCES TO CEASEFIRE AND TROOP DRAWDOWN ISSUES, HIS DESCRIPTION OF MILITARY SITUATION POINTS TOWARD POSSIBLE FLEXIBILITY ON CONTINUED CUBAN INFANTRY PRESENCE. SEVERAL HINTS IN SPEECH COULD BE INTERPRETED AS SIGNS THAT CASTRO IS CONCERNED ABOUT POSSIBILITY OF SETTLEMENT IMPOSED BY US AND USSR. END SUMMARY.

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 HAVANA 00715 01 OF 02 172110Z

2. FIDEL CASTRO, MARCH 15, DELIVERED TWO-AND-ONE HALF HOURS SPEECH IN ORIENTE PROVINCE ON OCCASION OF 100TH ANNIVERSARY OF PROTEST OF BARAGUA (THE ACT OF DEFIANCE BY CUBAN REVOLUTIONARY GENERAL ANTONIO MACEO IN FACE OF A CEASEFIRE/PEACE AGREEMENT SIGNED BY OTHER CUBAN REVOLUTIONARY FORCES AND SPAIN BEHIND MACEO'S BACK - WITHOUT GUARANTEE OF FULL POLITICAL GAINS SOUGHT BY REVOLUTIONARIES.)

WHILE IT IS UNCERTAIN WHETHER THE CUBAN LEADER WAS SEEKING TO DRAW PARALLEL BETWEEN BARAGUA SCENARIO (WITH CASTRO IN MACEO ROLE) AND CURRENT US-SOVIET COMMUNICATIONS ON HORN CEASEFIRE/TROOP DRAWDOWN, IT IS CLEAR THAT DEFIANT AND MAXIMALIST FRAME OF MIND CHARACTERIZED BY BARAGUA PROTEST IS VERY CONGENIAL TO CASTRO. (IN INTERESTING ASIDE, CASTRO REVEALED THAT CUBAN POLITBURO HAD DUBBED DISPATCH OF CUBAN COMBATANTS TO ETHIOPIA AS "OPERATION PROTEST OF BARAGUA".)

3. CASTRO, LAYING OUT DETAILED CONSPIRATORIAL SEQUENCE, ATTRIBUTED CENTRAL, ALBEIT INDIRECT, RESPONSIBILITY FOR HORN WAR TO US AND NATO ALLIES. (COMMENT: FOR MOST PART, UNLIKE BROTHER RAUL'S MARCH 11 SPEECH - SEE HAVANA 652, FIDEL CASTRO SPARED US FROM SOLO CRITICISM.) CASTRO CLAIMED THAT SOMALIS, AWARE OF FAVORABLE WESTERN AND SAUDI/IRANIAN REACTION, WAITED UNTIL MOST RADICAL, ANTI-WESTERN FIGURE (MENGISTU) ASSUMED POWER IN ADDIS BEFORE LAUNCHING WAR. PRIZE THAT SOMALI "RIGHTIST FACTION" DESIRED, CASTRO SAID, WAS PETRODOLLARS AND US AND NATO ECONOMIC HELP AS WELL AS OGADEN.

4. IN HIS CONSPIRATORIAL THESIS, CASTRO ATTRIBUTED SPECIAL RESPONSIBILITY TO SAUDI ARABIA AND IRAN WHOSE KING AND SHAH HAD BEEN PARTICULARLY "PREOCCUPIED BY FALL OF HAILE SELASSIE." (COMMENT: CASTRO'S ABRASIVE TREATMENT OF SAUDI AND IRANIAN "FEUDAL MONARCHIES" LEAVES LITTLE DOUBT AS TO HIS SEALOUS DISLIKE FOR THESE COUNTRIES - CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 HAVANA 00715 01 OF 02 172110Z

A FACTOR OF PERHAPS LONG-TERM SIGNIFICANCE.)

5. WITH REGARD TO SOMALI INTERNAL POLITICS, CASTRO MADE CLEAR THAT HE THOUGHT SIAD HAD PERSONALLY BETRAYED HIM. POINTING TO HIS MARCH 20, 1977 ADEN MEDIATION EFFORT, CASTRO SAID THAT SOMALI LEADER HAD SOLEMNLY PLEDGED NOT TO INVADE ETHIOPIA, BUT CUBANS NOW KNOW THAT INVASION PLANS HAD ALREADY BEEN MADE BY THAT DATE. CASTRO SAID THAT THERE ARE TWO FACTIONS NOW VYING IN SOMALIA - A REACTIONARY, RIGHTIST FACTION ALIGNED WITH IRAN AND SAUDI ARABIA(SIAD) AND A PROGRESSIVE, LEFTIST FACTION. CASTRO SAID THAT RIGHTIST FACTION HAS SUFFERED GREAT DEFEAT, ALTHOUGH WESTERN POWERS ARE NOW SEEKING TO BUOY IT UP. BUT, CASTRO, ADDED, GIVEN PRESENCE OF LEFTIST FACTION CUBANS WILL WATCH TO SEE WHAT HAPPENS IN COMING WEEKS. CASTRO PROTECTED HIMSELF AGAINST ACCUSATIONS OF CUBAN INTERFERENCE IN INTERNAL AFFAIRS BY POINTING OUT THAT LEADERSHIP PROBLEM CORRESPONDED TO SOMALIS, NOT CUBANS NOR OTHER POWERS.

6. ON BORDER CROSSING QUESTION, CASTRO CHARACTERIZED ETHIOPIAN PLEDGES OF NO BORDER CROSSING AS "JUST AND CORRECT", BUT HE ADDED THAT PLEDGE PRESUMES THAT AGGRESSIONS WILL NOT BE REPEATED BY SOMALIS. IF THEY ARE, HE SAID, "NO COUNTRY

CAN ACCEPT ATTACKS WITHOUT A RESPONSE." THUS, HE LEFT
OPEN POSSIBILITY FOR ACTION ACROSS BORDER INTO SOMALIA,
THOUGH HE STATED THIS WILL PROBABLY NOT BE NECESSARY BECAUSE
"AGGRESSOR FORCES ARE TOTALLY DEFEATED" AND CUBA "TOTALLY
SUPPORTS" ETHIOPIA. CASTRO ADDED HIS PERSONAL ASSESSMENT
THAT SOMALIS "WOULD PROBABLY NOT AGAIN COMMIT STUPIDITIES",
ALTHOUGH NATO POWERS MAY ENCOURAGE "NEW AGGRESSIONS."

7. CASTRO'S SPEECH NOTABLY OMITTED ANY REFERENCE TO FUTURE
CEASEFIRE AND CUBAN TROOP DRAWDOWNS (THOUGH HE EXPRESSED SUPPORT
FOR ETHIOPIAN RESISTANCE TO CEASEFIRE WHEN TERRITORY WAS
OCCUPIED.) DISCUSSING PREVIOUS BUILD-UP OF CUBAN COMBATANTS,
HOWEVER, CASTRO MINIMIZED NECESSITY FOR CUBAN INFANTRY,
POINTING OUT THAT INFANTRY UNITS HAD BEEN SENT PRIMARILY
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 04 HAVANA 00715 01 OF 02 172110Z

TO MAINTAIN EFFECTIVE COORDINATED OPERATIONS (THOUGH USE
OF COMMON LANGUAGE) WITH CUBAN TANK AND ARTILLERY UNITS.
HE ALSO ADDED THAT ETHIOPIANS HAVE ABUNDANT SOLDIERS AND
THAT IT IS EASIER TO TRAIN INFANTRY, THAN ARMOR AND ARTILLERY
UNITS. (COMMENT: THE UPSHOT OF CASTRO'S REMARKS APPEARS
TO BE THAT CUBAN INFANTRY UNITS COULD BE EASILY DISPENSED
WITH, PARTICULARLY IN ABSENCE OF MAJOR COMBAT.)

CONFIDENTIAL

NNN

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 HAVANA 00715 02 OF 02 172118Z
ACTION ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 EUR-12 NEA-10 ISO-00 IO-13 HA-05
ACDA-12 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10 L-03
NSAE-00 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 OMB-01 NSCE-00 SSO-00
USIE-00 INRE-00 /115 W

-----033435 172130Z /64

O R 171629Z MAR 78
FM USINT HAVANA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1417
INFO AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

USMISSION USNATO

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 HAVANA 0715

8. CASTRO MADE NO DIRECT REFERENCE TO CUBAN POLICY ON ERITREA AND DJIBOUTI. HE, HOWEVER, REPEATEDLY REFERRED TO ENDING OF WAR ON "EASTERN FRONT," RATHER THAN ENDING OF WAR IN ETHIOPIA AND MADE REFERENCE TO PREVIOUS HELP TO SOMALIS AGAINST "BANDITS, SECESSIONIST MOVEMENTS, AND REGIONAL REACTIONARIES."

9. NOTABLY ABSENT FROM CASTRO'S SPEECH WAS ANY MARKED PRAISE FOR OR EVEN MUCH REFERENCE TO THE SOVIET UNION - PERHAPS BECAUSE OF HIS DESIRE TO CLAIM INDEPENDENT CREDIT FOR CUBAN ACHIEVEMENTS OR PERHAPS BECAUSE OF CURRENT PERCEIVED WASHINGTON-MOSCOW MANEUVERINGS.

10 COMMENT: CASTRO'S SPEECH WAS DELIVERED DELIBERATELY, WITH VERY CAREFUL CHOICE OF WORDS. SOME FOREIGN DIPLOMATS HERE INTERPRET THIS AS INDICATIVE OF CASTRO'S SUBSERVIENCE TO MOSCOW LINE (THERE ARE RUMORS HERE THAT FOREIGN MINISTER MALMIERCA VISITED MOSCOW LAST WEEKEND ENROUTE FROM MADRID
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 HAVANA 00715 02 OF 02 172118Z

TO BEIRUT.) WE, HOWEVER, SEE HIS VERBAL PRECISION AS EFFORT TO PLACE PRESSURE ON SIAD (AND POSSIBLY ON SOVIETS) THROUGH THE HARDLY DISGUISED CALL FOR SIAD'S OVERTHROW AND VEILED WARNINGS OF BORDER CROSSING WITHOUT OVERSTEPPING BOUNDS AND ENCOURAGING DEEPER WESTERN INVOLVEMENT. WHILE CASTRO APPEARS TO BE PREPARING CASE FOR SOME TROOP DRAWDOWN AND DE FACTO CEASEFIRE, HIS INVOCATION OF BARAGUA PROTEST THEME OF NO SETTLEMENT BEFORE FULL SATISFACTION OF REVOLUTIONARY DEMANDS SUGGESTS THAT HIS GOAL REMAINS SIAD OVERTHROW OR TOTAL OBEISANCE AND SUBSEQUENT SETTLEMENT OF CRISIS ON CUBAN-ETHIOPIAN TERMS. WHETHER THIS MAXIMALISM IS COMPATIBLE WITH SOVIET POLICY GOALS VIS-A-VIS WEST IS UNCERTAIN, BUT MOSCOW WILL PRESUMABLY HAVE TO TAKE CASTRO'S POSITION INTO ACCOUNT.

11. CONCERNING PRECISE TACTICAL MECHANISM TO BRING OFF CASTRO'S SCHEME, WE NOTE THAT GRANMA, MARCH 15, GAVE PROMINENT COVERAGE TO CONDITIONS CITED BY ETHIOPIAN HERALD FOR SETTLEMENT OF CRISIS: UNCONDITIONAL WITHDRAWAL OF SOMALI ARMY, SOMALI RENUNCIATION OF CLAIMS TO PARTS OF ETHIOPIA AND KENYA AND ALL OF DJIBOUTI, DEMARCATION OF ETHIOPIAN-SOMALI BORDER, NON-INTERFERENCE IN ETHIOPIAN INTERNAL AFFAIRS, WAR INDEMNIZATION TO ETHIOPIA BY US, SAUDI ARABIA, IRAN, EGYPT AND OTHERS AND CEASEFIRE. WE PRESUME THAT CUBANS WILL CITE THESE DEMANDS, AND POSSIBLE SOMALI THREAT TO ETHIOPIA, AS JUSTIFICATION FOR MAINTAINING BUILDUP OF FORCES ALONG SOMALI BORDER DURING COMING WEEKS IN WHICH FATE OF SIAD COULD BE DECIDED.

12. AT SAME TIME, WE NOTE THAT CASTRO'S AVOIDANCE OF
UNILATERAL ATTACK ON US, HIS FAILURE TO DISCARD CEASEFIRE OUT-
RIGHT AND HIS SEEMING LIP SERVICE TO POSSIBLE INFANTRY DRAWDOWN
MAY OFFER SOME PROMISE
FOR SOME, ALBEIT MINIMAL, GESTURES IN OUR DIRECTION, PERHAPS
UNDER PROMPTING FROM MOSCOW. BUT CASTRO APPEARS TO HAVE
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 HAVANA 00715 02 OF 02 172118Z

MADE CLEAR THAT HE WILL NOT SACRIFICE MAIN LINES OF HIS
ESTABLISHED AND TWICE SUCCESSFUL AFRICAN INTERVENTION FOR
THE SAKE OF PLACATING WASHINGTON OR MOSCOW. CASTRO'S
EXALATION OF CUBAN SUCCESS AND HIS ASSERTIONS THAT CUBAN
LOSSES ARE "MINIMAL", THAT REVOLUTIONARY SOLIDARITY KNOWS
NO BARRIERS OF DISTANCE, AND HIS MACABRE OBSERVATION THAT,
"TO DIE IS TO WIN A VICTORY" ALL POINT TOWARD CONTINUED
CUBAN AFRICAN/MIDDLE EAST ACTIVISM.

LANE

CONFIDENTIAL

NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: TROOP DEPLOYMENT, ARMISTICE, SPEECHES
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 17 mar 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978HAVANA00715
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780119-1115
Format: TEL
From: HAVANA
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780356/aaaabuxt.tel
Line Count: 246
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 629917c5-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION ARA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 5
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 78 HAVANA 666
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 28 apr 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 3294651
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: CASTRO APPRAISES ETHIOPIAN VICTORY
TAGS: PDEV, PBOR, MILI, ET, SO, CU, UR, (CASTRO RUZ, FIDEL)
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odhc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/629917c5-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014